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RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9850

UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 000629

SIPDIS

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WHA/CAR FOR JROSHOLT, DOL/ILAB FOR TINA MCCARTER, DRL/IL
FOR TU DANG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [EIND](#) [ETRD](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [USAID](#) [NS](#)

SUBJECT: UPDATE OF WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR INFORMATION
IN SURINAME FOR MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

REF: STATE 149662

11. (U) In response to reftel Post provides the following
updated information on Suriname's commitment to eliminate the
worst forms of child labor.

1A. (U) Suriname has ratified ILO Convention 182 regarding the
worst forms of child labor. ILO Convention 138, the Minimum
Age Convention, is, however, still awaiting ratification. In
Suriname there is a discrepancy between the minimum age for
labor, which is 14 years, and the compulsory education age,
which is 12 years. Convention 138 can only be ratified if
the compulsory education age is pulled up to at least 15
years to conform to the ILO norm. The Ministry of Education
is currently working on plans to revamp the educational
system, which would likely address this inconsistency.

The country's labor laws do not define the worst forms of
child labor or hazardous work. In January 2007, the
Government installed a working group dealing with Child
Labor, consisting of officials from the Ministries of Labor,
Social Affairs, and Education, and representatives from the
labor unions, the private sector, and NGOs. The objective of
this working group is to establish a National Commission on
child labor, as provided for in Article 4 of Convention 182.
Once established, the national commission will advise the
Government on the issue of child labor, review the labor
legislation, make suggestions for change, and develop a list
of occupations considered to
be the worst forms of child labor.

1B. (U) The Ministry of Labor's Department of Labor
Inspection, with approximately 40 inspectors, has
responsibility to implement and enforce labor laws, including
those pertaining to the worst forms of child labor. There is
no information available regarding the number of child labor
investigations that were conducted over the past year.

Officials at the Ministry of Labor are in close consultation
with the International Labor Organization (ILO). In March of
2007, representatives from Suriname attended a training in
Jamaica dealing with the reporting requirements of ILO
Conventions 182 and 138.

1C. (U) The government has not developed social programs to
prevent and withdraw children from the worst forms of child
labor.

The Government provides support to vocational programs for
dropouts and older children that can serve as an alternative
to work.

Schooling is compulsory until 12 years of age, although some school-age children, particularly in the interior, did not have access to education to lack of transportation, building facilities, or teachers. School attendance was free through the university level; however, most public schools imposed a nominal enrollment fee, ranging from \$9 to \$48 (SRD 25 to SRD 135) per year to cover costs. The short school day (most schools end at 1:00 p.m. or earlier) does not discourage child labor, but there is no information which would indicate any direct correlation to child labor.

1D. (U) The country does not have a comprehensive policy or national program of action on child labor. The Ministries of labor and Social Affairs have incorporated points of action with regard to child labor in their respective policies. Government officials have on numerous occasions stressed the importance of combating child labor.

Suriname is making limited progress in dealing with child labor. There is a lack of statistical data regarding the labor environment and more specifically the child labor situation in Suriname. There are, however, indications that there are cases of child labor in Paramaribo and in the Western District of Nickerie, and that children are put to work in the gold mining sector, in sawmills, and in the commercial sex industry. Government action to combat child labor needs to be expanded beyond urban areas, and the necessary resources will have to be allocated to investigate child labor cases in the country's districts and in the hinterland. The country will also have to ratify the ILO Convention 138.

GENTON